



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KC MAN SENTENCED, FAUCETT MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN ST. JOSEPH AREA MARIJUANA DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a Kansas City man has been sentenced and a Faucett, Mo., man has pleaded guilty for their roles in a conspiracy to distribute at least a ton of marijuana in the St. Joseph, Mo., area and elsewhere.

Joshua M. Brightwell, 20, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced this afternoon by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs to five years in prison without parole. On January 4, 2002, **Brightwell** pleaded guilty to his role in a conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) or more of marijuana.

Gerry Taylor, 26, of Faucett, Mo., pleaded guilty on August 14, 2002, to his role in a conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) or more of marijuana.

According to Graves, **Brightwell** and **Taylor** were indicted by a federal grand jury on August 22, 2001. Additional co-defendants, who have pleaded guilty to their role in the conspiracy to distribute marijuana and await sentencing, are **Darrell L. Harris, Jr.**, 24, of Faucett, and **Philipp J. Calandra**, 25, of Kansas City, Mo.

By pleading guilty, Graves said, **Taylor** admitted that on five occasions between December 1999 and May 8, 2001, he helped **Shannon Power** and others unload semi-trucks full of numerous boxes of marijuana. Most of the marijuana was unloaded in Buchanan County, where it had been transported from Texas. **Power**, 34, of St. Joseph, pleaded guilty to his role in the conspiracy in a related case on September 28, 2001.

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MARIJUANA

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According to the plea agreement, **Taylor** distributed some of the marijuana in the St. Joseph area. **Taylor** also admitted that on May 8, 2001, a semi-truck carrying 1,088 pounds of marijuana was brought to his residence at 17970 Inter Urban Road.

As a result of his guilty plea, **Taylor** could be subject to a sentence of at least 10 years in prison without parole, and as much as life imprisonment without parole, plus a fine up to \$4 million. The sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled sometime after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Abram McGull II and Lajuana M. Counts. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Buchanan County Drug Strike Force and the Independence, Mo., Police Department.
